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2012 International CES

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CES 2012

DAY 1

DAY 2

DAY 3



gives



noticed


during CES in

Las Vegas

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DISTRO Issue #22...



*I can attempt
to put it into
words but really
you can't know
what it's like
until you've
experienced it.*

»Enter

EDITOR'S LETTER
**The Best Worst Week
of the Year Begins**

By Tim Stevens

THE WEEKLY STAT
**2012 AEE Makes a Split
from CES**

By Christopher Trout

RECOMMENDED READING
Reflections On CES

By Don Melanson

»CES Timeline

DAY ONE
**Lenovo X1 Hybrid, Acer S5,
AR.Drone 2.0, Acer Iconia
Tab A700, Lenovo IdeaTab
S2 and more.**

DAY TWO
**Guitar Apprentice, Trans-
former Prime TF700T, LG's
55-inch OLED TV, HTC Titan
II, HP Envy 14 Spectre and
more.**

DAY THREE
**Roku Streaming Stick, Sony
SmartWatch, Razer's Proj-
ect Fiona, Samsung Series
9, Karotz and more.**

»ESC

SWITCHED ON
The Wintel Weave

By Ross Rubin

LAST WORD
Tablets, Tablets, Tablets

By Dustin Harbin

The Best Worst Week of the Year Begins

Editor's Letter

Where to begin!? The week of CES is, for Engadget, something that's... rather hard to describe. I can attempt to put it into words but really you can't know what it's like until you've experienced it. And you haven't experienced it until you've crushed it with the Engadget crew. That includes early mornings, late nights and exhausted fits of giggling at odd hours of the day. ¶ I got into town on the Thursday before the show, helping to get our double-wide (and shrink-wrapped) trailer set up — and, of course, to test out our properly boss (though egregiously overpriced) internet connection. It passed and, after about a day, the tables were set and the power strips hung with care and we got down to work.

On Saturday we trained and rested. On Sunday we got to work. Trips to see Acer, Lenovo, Samsung and to the pre-CES Unveiled event got things going, the latter of which was a complete madhouse. Then Monday things got serious. We ran through almost 250 posts on this the first full day of coverage plus completed 10 live-blogs — and that was before the show even began. (That's about one post every three minutes, if you do the math.)

Keynote events from LG, AT&T, Sharp, Dish, Intel, Sam-




sung and Microsoft resulted in dozens of announcements, after which we were off running to get our first hands-on with these newly official objects of desire. What devices, exactly? Well, read on for a selection of some of the best, but I must say


I do have a couple of favorites. Surprisingly, they're both TVs.

Both LG and Samsung showed off 55-inch OLED TVs that are, quite simply, something to behold. They don't impress with perspective-warping dimensions nor with a mind-warping pixel density, instead delivering the kind of rich colors and amazing contrast that we've come to expect on Samsung phones. There's speculation that both sets use the same panel, which makes sense, but more important is just how much they'll cost. We heard (probably unfounded) talk of an \$8,000 price tag, which sounds both outrageous and yet not too far from appropriate for such a bleeding-edge device.

Another thing that caught my eye is the Galaxy Tab 7.7 LTE, the Americanized and Verizon-bound version of the 7.7. This is sporting a gorgeous 1280 x 800 Super AMOLED Plus display and a size that feels pretty darned close to perfect for my hands. That said, it does feel a



Of all the Ultrabooks we saw, and there were predictably many, the Acer Aspire S5 to me has the best curves. Slinky and deliciously slim.




hair chubby compared to some of the slinkier tabs we've been sampling lately. But, if the battery life is solid, I can live with that. No word on pricing but I have a bad feeling it won't be cheap.

Of all the Ultrabooks we saw, and there were predictably many, the Acer Aspire S5 to me has the best curves. Slinky and deliciously slim it has a gorgeous matte black finish and the kind of design that will make you feel genuinely special pulling it out of your messenger bag. It definitely suffers from "looks like an Air" syndrome, but I can think of many worse comparisons.

But enough about what I thought was special, let's get you into the first round of news from the show. In this special edition we have the beginnings of our CES timeline, showing you not only what we saw but also when we saw it. You'll read about all of the above plus a whole awful lot more stuff that went down here at the trailer.

Meanwhile, Ross Rubin shares his opinions on the disconnect between Microsoft and Intel when it comes to marketing Ultrabooks, a moniker that's becoming increasingly watered down as applied to bigger and bigger devices. Finally, we have

another round of recommended reading that you won't want to miss. We can't kick back and relax as we're working day and night to bring you all the news, but that doesn't mean that *you* can't get comfortable as you get caught up. 



TIM STEVENS
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF,
ENGADGET

23,000 Visitors



CES

140,000 Visitors

2012 AEE Makes a Split from CES — Here's What We're Missing

The 2012 Adult Entertainment Expo has officially separated from its long-time companion, CES, taking with it hoards of porn stars, producers, distributors and that little something extra it's brought to the Las Vegas convention center in years past. So just what has AEE contributed to the trade show madness (aside from the obvious)? Well, in 2011, the expo's attendance reached 23,000 — for comparison's sake, last years CES played host to 140,000 total humans. — *Christopher Trout*

**Based on attendance numbers supplied by AVN and CEA*

The Weekly Stat



The More CES Stays the Same, the More it Changes



by Harry McCracken
Technologizer

How did we get from there to here? Harry McCracken takes a short trip back through the history of CES with the aid of some gems from the official photo archives, and the results are... interesting. As you'd expect, some things like Sony's presence haven't changed all that much over the years, while others (including some once large companies) have fallen out of favor along with the fashions. Then again, given the accelerating pace of things these days, it likely won't be all that long before CES 2012 looks as dated as a leisure suit.

AROUND THE WEB

My CES Predictions... For 2022

by Lindsey Turrentine
CNET



Predicting what will show up at this year's CES is one thing, but what about the next ten years? *CNET*'s Lindsey Turrentine offers up a few possibilities, including ever-present flexible displays, televisions that aren't televisions, and true home automation. And, yes, she expects CES itself (or something like it) to still be around.

Is the Consumer Electronics Show Doomed?

by Glenn Derene
Popular Mechanics



On the flipside of the *CNET* piece, Glenn Derene suggests that massive trade shows like CES may soon be a thing of the past — or rather, they may return to their roots as "trade" shows, with companies instead holding their own events for major product launches.

A Cautionary CES Tale: What Tablet Makers Can Learn From Sins Past

by Mike Isaac



Wired Gadget Lab
Tablets were one of the big stories at CES 2011 but few were able to match the hype generated. *Wired*'s Mike Isaac looks at what companies might be able to do to avoid making the same mistakes all over again.

The Critics Rave... For Microsoft?

by Nick Wingfield
The New York Times



Nick Wingfield had a scoop in this piece with word of the CES debut of the latest Nokia Windows Phone, but he's also provided a great look at the would-be turnaround of Microsoft's mobile operating system, and the team behind it.

Recommended Reading

CES 2012

CES 2012 wouldn't officially get under way until Tuesday, but by the time the show-floor opened up, we'd already plowed through almost 320 posts in two days. The pace of the world's most anticipated consumer electronics show can be maddening, and the amount of news hitting sites like Engadget overwhelming. So we've filtered out all of the noise to bring you the biggest breakouts of this year's show in an easily digestible timeline.

DAY 1

DAY 2

DAY 3





DAY ONE

CES
2012



12:34PM

SNAPSHOT

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SNAPSHOT

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LENOVO THINKPAD X1 HYBRID

The X1 Hybrid isn't your typical laptop refresh. Though it looks like the X1 we reviewed last spring, it represents a stark about-face in the company's approach to battery life: the Hybrid edition (\$1,599 and up) packs a second, low-power processor made by Qualcomm, along with a custom, light-weight OS based on Android. Said differently, the laptop falls back on smartphone internals when longevity is paramount. ¶ This operating system, dubbed Instant Media Mode (IMM), functions like any other instant-on environment: it boots in about two seconds, and once you're there you can do basic things like check email, surf the web, listen to music, [\(CONT.\)](#)

PRICE
\$ 1,599+

AVAILABILITY
Second Quarter
2012

**FIRST
IMPRESSIONS**
A familiar,
instant-on
juice sipper.



“... THE BROWSER, ETC. SHOULDN'T BE MUCH OF A SURPRISE TO THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING ALONG.”

watch movies and browse photos. In the case of the X1 Hybrid, though, that instant-on OS also promises to double the X1's (disappointing) battery life, bringing the runtime to a max of 10 hours. ¶ As it happens, yours truly got to see an early version of the X1 Hybrid behind closed doors two months back. But you know what they say: pics or it didn't happen! So here's our first sanctioned look. If you've ever used one of Lenovo's Android-based tablets, those customizations should look familiar: the launcher is the same one we played with on the IdeaPad K1 and ThinkPad Tablet. So, the browser, etc. shouldn't be much of a surprise to those of you who have been following along. Loading the OS, moving into Windows 7 and launching apps within this Android-like environment is all fairly brisk, though not without a few pauses. What else can we say? It's Android! (Sort of!) Running on a ThinkPad!

— Dana Wollman

CES
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SEGWAYMAN

Moving through the crush of blood-thirsty journalists on deadline at CES' official kickoff is a feat in itself. While most use their elbows to navigate the throngs, some, like this reporter from NBC News, take a less conventional approach.

CES
2012

DAY 1

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ACER ASPIRE S5 ULTRABOOK

Acer brought its A-game to CES, by which we mean the “world’s thinnest Ultrabook.” The 13.3-inch Acer Aspire S5 just launched and we got our mitts all-over its super-svelte magnesium and aluminum exterior. ¶ Starting with the design, this has the same lovely brushed metal lid as its older brother, except this time the interior feels just as premium as what’s on the outside. You won’t find any plastic here, save for the keys: the bottom side and palm rest feel as rock-solid, and throughout it seems fairly immune to fingerprints (nothing like a bunch of pawing bloggers to put that to the test!). When yours truly wrested control of the S5 and held it in one hand, there wasn’t a hint of bend or flex, so we have high hopes for overall build quality. ¶ It’s also impossible not to notice that Acer’s whittled down the chassis — something that should be obvious when you pick it up for the first time, or even look at photos of it. Still, the drop- [\(CONT.\)](#)

PRICE
TBD

AVAILABILITY
Second
Quarter 2012

**FIRST
IMPRESSIONS**
The “world’s
thinnest
Ultrabook” is an
improvement,
but fails to
eliminate all of
its predecessor’s
flaws.

CES 2012

DAY 1

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SNAPSHOT

4:18PM

5:40PM

6:08PM



down compartment on the bottom, housing the ports, juts out near the hinge, creating a mild, but unsightly bulge. Not a deal-breaker, but it does seem to undermine Acer's claim to world's thinnest. ¶ Now here's where Acer hasn't learned from its previous follies. The keys have the same scratchy feel as what you'll find on the S3 or even the new mid-range Timeline Ultra laptops. More importantly, though, they're shallow. There's very little travel here — so little that you might feel your hands tense up slightly as you concentrate on hitting buttons hard enough so that your presses register. We also noticed that a handful of major keys remain woefully undersized (a common problem on 13-inch Ultrabooks), though the Enter key is amply appointed. ¶ That's about all we can say right now in good conscience, since our time with the S5 was so limited. As always, we'll reserve judgment until we can get one in to review, but for now we feel comfortable saying that this guy feels awfully... *familiar*.

— Dana Wollman

CES
2012

DAY 1

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ACER ICONIA TAB A700

So, the mystery quad-core tablet shown off by Acer at CES has a name... kinda. The Tegra 3-powered unit is the oft-rumored Iconia Tab A700, though, we were told repeatedly that this is just a demo — so don't be surprised if you never see an A700 come to market. Underneath the hood is a 1.3GHz quad-core Tegra 3 and a full gig of RAM for pushing customized Ice Cream Sandwich to its 10.1-inch 1080p "IPS quality" panel. The most glaring difference between Google's stock experience and Acer's version is the "ring" — a lockscreen launcher with a selection of shortcuts available depending on which direction you drag your finger. The textured back felt quite nice, though it sports a healthy amount of heft that might worry some fans of lightweight devices. As far as ports go, you're looking at HDMI, microSD and micro USB.

—By Terrence O'Brien

PRICE
TBD

AVAILABILITY
TBD

FIRST
IMPRESSIONS

We're eager to see the finished product, but, alas, it's but demo.

CES
2012

DAY 1

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PARROT AR.DRONE 2.0

We'd previously spied the Parrot's AR.Drone 2.0 banners here at the Las Vegas Convention Center, followed by a leak of what appeared to be the official press release. So, it's not like the cat — or in this case quadcopter — wasn't already partially out of the bag, but now at least, it's official. The new Drone touts much-improved 720p HD video-recording capability, a revamped app with updated flight controls and features, along with revised hardware and reinforced hulls. ¶ Off the bat, it's clear that the AR.Drone 2.0 is more aggressively styled, with sharper edges and streamlined curves. The new indoor hull has also been re-enforced, for even more protection against any accidental floor-dives. Parrot's also aimed to streamline the user experience, starting with its Freeflight 2.0 app for Android and iOS, which acts as a portal to all of the AR's various flight modes and related games and software. Notably, unlike its predecessor, [\(CONT.\)](#)

PRICE
\$300

AVAILABILITY
Second
Quarter 2012

**FIRST
IMPRESSIONS**
Higher heights,
sleeker design
and a mobile
app put 2.0
a cut above.

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you can now capture videos and photos straight from your device and then share them to sites like YouTube. It also features a new “traveling” mode, which allows for autonomous video recording along a pre-determined flight path — perfect for budding filmmakers who’d like some aerial pizzaz. The Drone’s HD camera is smoother looking during flight, with much less video-stutter than what could be achieved with the original. While we weren’t able to take out our own clip, we were shown some previously recorded videos loaded on the iPad being used to control it, and they certainly looked very good. ¶ When it comes to flying, Parrot has made two notable additions to the UAV itself, which allows for easier control.

Along with the previous array of sensors, it now has a 3D magnetometer, which allows it to auto-orient based on its front camera and the position of the smartphone you’re using. Furthermore, thanks to an added “pressure sensor,” pilots will be able to fly higher than the previous model, in upwards of six meters. Impressively, having all of these new updates and features, we’re told the AR.Drone 2.0 will manage the same amount of flying time as its predecessor. If you’re flying bug is getting the best of you, you’ll be pleased to know that the AR.Drone 2.0 is set to ship is “Q2 of this year,” at the same \$300 price point of its older sibling.

—By Joe Pollicino

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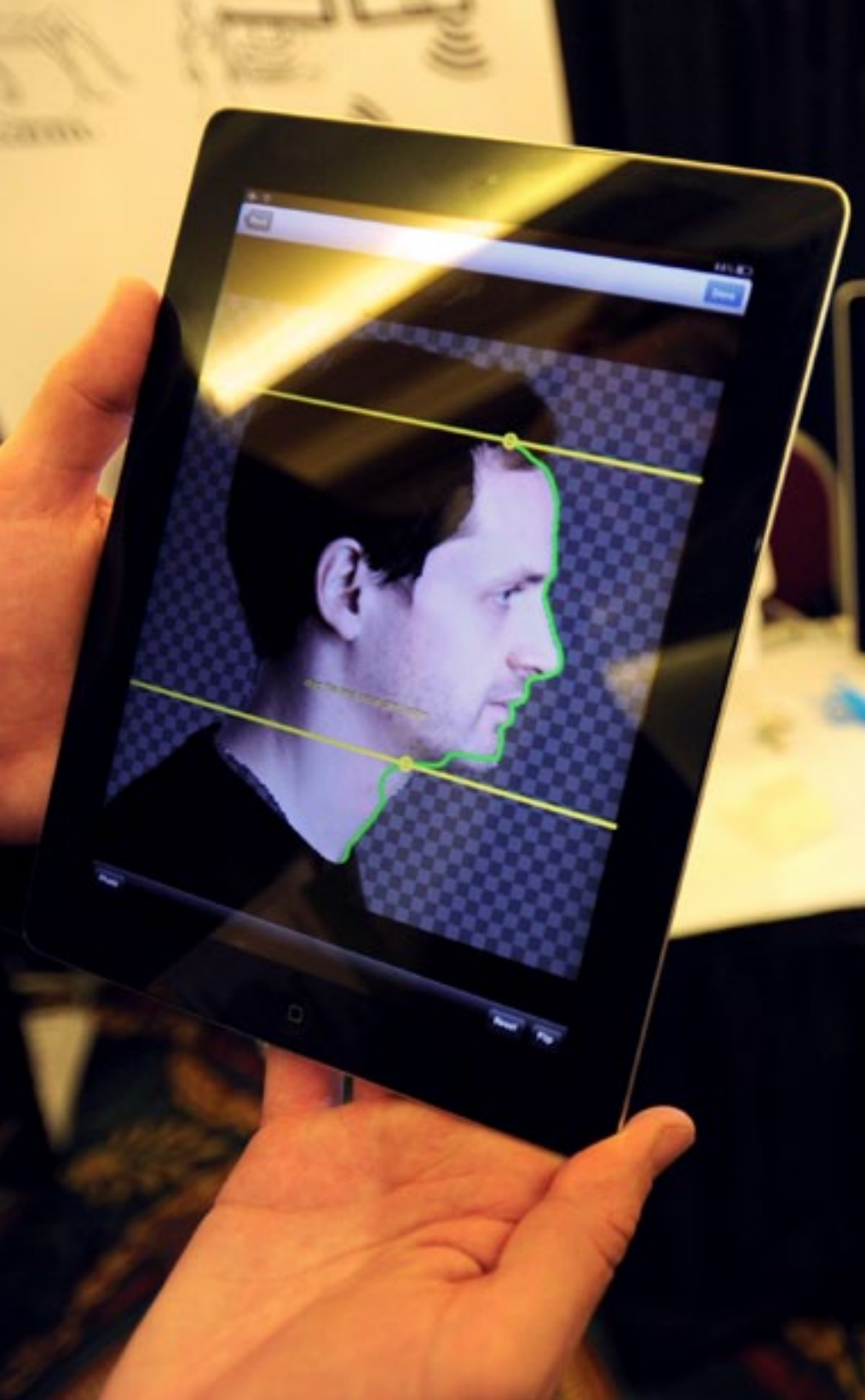
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CES ON ICE

For some, CES Unveiled is as much about the latest gadgetry as it is about the surf and turf. This year's show featured two full bars and a massive buffet, at the center of which was this rather underwhelming CES-themed ice sculpture.



CES 2012

DAY 1

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SNAPSHOT

SCULPTEO IPHONE APP

What do you get the crazy billionaire in your life who has everything? Why, a vase, based on their profile, of course. That centuries-long dream has been realized with the release of the new Sculpteo iPhone app — snap a photo of your profile or the profile of a loved one, and the app will convert it into a printable 3D object. You can also get your profile on a mug, if that's your cup of tea — or even designs based on your Twitter activity. The app is currently available on iTunes and it's a free download, but the sculptures will cost you, based on design. —*By Brian Heater*

PRICE

App is free, but finished products vary

AVAILABILITY

Available now from iTunes

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

New wave self-indulgence.

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CES
2012

DAY 1

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LENOVO LEPAD K2010

Remember those lovely leaks of Lenovo's Tegra 3 tablet from last November? Well, it showed up here at CES under the LePad K2010 moniker for China, while elsewhere it'll likely be known as the IdeaTab K2. We won't comment much on the unfinished software (so no luck with controlling the cursor using the fingerprint scanner on the back), but build quality wise we enjoyed the faux brushed metal cover on the back, and similarly, the sharp 1920 x 1200 IPS display between the speakers was very impressive (yes, we double-checked with Lenovo on these numbers). ¶ We also received confirmation that the camera on the back has an eight megapixel resolution, but obviously we'll wait and see if the picture quality lives up to expectations. Alas, there's still no word on availability, but regardless, China will get first dibs on this juicy quad-core slate. On the bright side, this should give ample time for potential buyers to save up — the K2010 is aimed at high-end business users, after all. ¶ Fresh info straight from Beijing tells us that the K2010's clock speed's been given a gentle bump from 1.6GHz to 1.7GHz. And those speakers sandwiching the display? Those are what Lenovo calls "Super Surround Speaker (3S)" that consists of four drivers. We're also told to expect a charging station. —By Richard Lai

PRICE
TBDAVAILABILITY
TBDFIRST
IMPRESSIONS
A powerful
and unusual
prototype...
stay tuned.

LENOVO'S IDEATAB S2 10-INCH

This isn't the first time Lenovo's released a tablet-keyboard combo, though the illusive IdeaPad U1 Hybrid was merely adding Windows to the updated LePad via the keyboard dock. That said, Lenovo's IdeaTab S2 10-inch is a full package dedicated to Android 4.0, and it sports a 1.5GHz dual-core Snapdragon 8x60A or 8960. Compared to the ASUS Transformer Prime and Samsung Galaxy Tab 10.1, this 10-inch IdeaTab comes close to or even beats them with a 0.34-inch (8.69mm) thickness and a 1.27-pound (580 grams) weight — certainly much better than its Chinese counterpart, the LePad S2010. Other features include a 1280 x 800 LED-backlit IPS display, 3G with call support, 1GB LPDDR2 RAM, SSD of up to 64GB, HDMI Micro connection and front (1.3 megapixel) and rear (5

megapixel with auto-focus) cameras. As for battery life, the tablet alone can keep cranking for up to 9 hours, and sliding it into the keyboard dock gets you an additional 9 hours plus two USB 2.0 ports, a multitouch trackpad and an SDHC card reader. No word on availability or pricing yet, so we'll keep poking Lenovo until we hear something. ¶ Something interesting we spotted was the grid-like LeLauncher, which consists of square-shaped widgets that expand to bigger widgets or launch the relevant apps. Lenovo's folks also mentioned that compared to the ASUS Transformer series, the S2's "clam dock" slot hinge is designed in such a way that makes it easier to snap the tablet onto it, and we agree with them. —By Richard Lai

PRICE
TBD

AVAILABILITY
TBD

FIRST
IMPRESSIONS
Look out ASUS,
there's a new
transformer
in town.



DAY TWO

CES
2012



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SNAPSHOT

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SNAPSHOT

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GUITAR APPRENTICE

You know the whole “why don’t you learn to play a real guitar” backlash that comes with the release of every *Guitar Hero* title? Multiply that by a hundred, and you’re about ready to get down with Guitar Apprentice. The iPad add-on from the folks who brought you the similarly named Piano Apprentice turns your Apple tablet into something roughly the shape of a Gibson SG. From afar, it does look like a guitar. It’s a fair bit lighter though, the wood swapped out for plastic, which feels pretty hollow. ¶ The iPad sits in the body of the Guitar Apprentice. Right now, it just works with Garage Band, though the company tells us that it’s working on a proprietary [\(CONT.\)](#)

PRICE

\$100 approx.

AVAILABILITY

TBD

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

If you want to take your *Guitar Hero* skills up to 11, this soon to be released iPad add-on may give you a leg up, but you may not want to quit your day job.



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app, so don't let the fact that the neck doesn't line up right now throw you too much. The neck is covered with small buttons, which light up and play as notes from their corresponding placement on the fretboard through a small speaker on the bottom of the guitar's body — hold multiple frets down simultaneously and you'll get a chord. ¶ The speaker on the thing is pretty quiet — that can be adjusted with the single volume knob, though that, like a lot about

the Guitar Apprentice, isn't quite ready. The company tells us that the device is still a ways off, which means that, at present, you still can't strum the thing. Still, it's actually kind of neat, if totally ridiculous. This could be a solid educational device for parents who aren't quite ready to plunk down the cash for a guitar and amp. When it's released, the Guitar Apprentice will run around \$100 — plus the price of an iPad, naturally. — *Brian Heater*

CES
2012

DAY 2

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SNAPSHOT

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VIZIO'S LAPTOPS, DESKTOPS AND 10-INCH TABLET

One of the more intriguing stories to come out of CES so far has been Vizio's decision to enter the PC market. The company's laptops and desktops have been leaked, announced and shown off in press shots, but now we've gotten up-close and personal with the machines. We also got a chance to manhandle its 10-inch tablet that officially broke cover this morning. We spoke with CTO Matt McRae about the cooperation with Microsoft that surrounded the development of the PCs, and confirmed they would ship (late summer / back to school time-frame most likely) with a clean Windows 7 (8 when that is available) image — no bloatware. While the hardware, specs and design were still not final, we can confirm they're as thin and light as they looked in [\(CONT.\)](#)

PRICE
TBA

AVAILABILITY
Late Summer /
Early Spring 2012

FIRST IMPRESSIONS
Vizio transitions its display technology into a series of computers and a tablet, boasting high quality displays, but leaving the rest of the details to be confirmed.



CES
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DAY 2

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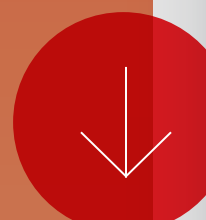
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SNAPSHOT

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the press pics. The screens on these demo units were equally impressive, and Vizio promises they will be among the best available when they ship. ¶ All but the smallest laptop feature 1080p screens, and the desktops even have HDMI passthrough, so they can be used as an HDTV with the PC portion turned completely off. The thin profile of the all-in-one (that neck is a single piece of metal, not just painted plastic) is made possible by integrating the power supply into the subwoofer. As for the tablet, it's running an upgraded version of Vizio's custom Android skin, currently built on Honeycomb, although the company mentioned it will upgrade to the latest stable version (read: ICS) once it's available. The 8-inch that's currently available was also in the house running the upgraded skin, and all of those units should see an OTA patch kicking them up a version eventually. —By Richard Lawler



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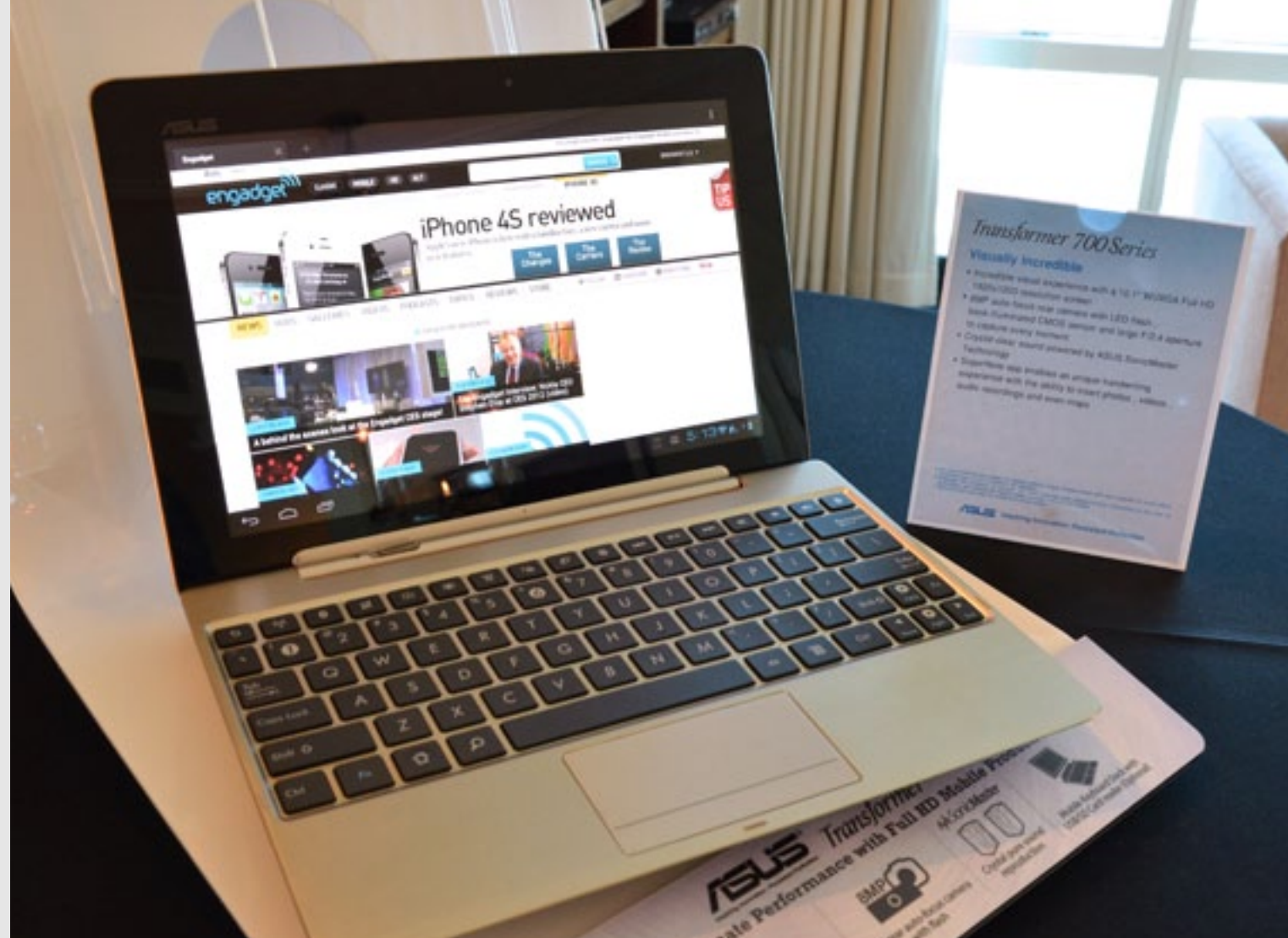
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SNAPSHOT

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ASUS TRANSFORMER PRIME TF700T

PRICE
\$599 - \$699

AVAILABILITY
Second Quarter 2012

FIRST IMPRESSIONS
ASUS' Transformer Prime is moving up market, with beefed up specs and a price tag to match.

Flustered with the original Transformer Prime you just purchased? We'd advise you to have a seat. ASUS just took the wraps off an all new Transformer Prime (the TF700T) here at CES, which is presumably designed to rival Acer's newly-announced Iconia Tab A700. This guy won't be an outright replacement for the existing TF201 model; it's simply an upmarket alternative for those tired of the same specs over and over again. It's a 10.1-incher with NVIDIA's Tegra 3 within (1.3GHz quad-core Cortex A9), a Super IPS+ / Gorilla Glass 10.1-inch display with a downright silly 1,920 x 1,200 resolution and 32GB or 64GB of internal storage space. There's also an 8 megapixel rear camera / 2 megapixel front-facing cam, support for 1080p

playback, 802.11b/g/n WiFi, Bluetooth 2.1+EDR, a micro-HDMI port, microSD card reader, a 25Whr Lithium-Polymer battery and a chassis that weighs just over a pound. It'll ship with Android 4.0.1 onboard, and will be compatible with the same keyboard dock as the existing Prime. Needless to say, ASUS is aiming for the stars with a build sheet like this, and the \$599 to \$699 retail price points enable you to know it. It'll land next quarter here in North America, and no, there's no GPS functionality listed on the spec sheet; though we've been informed that this new Prime will come with a new back panel design that should enhance WiFi, BT and GPS performance. — *Darren Murph*





CES
2012

DAY 2

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SNAPSHOT

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LG 55-INCH OLED HDTV

LG's press conference at CES this morning was a surprisingly light-hearted and breezy affair, clocking in at around 45 minutes and bringing with it more than its share of bad jokes. There was, however, one dramatic moment — you could actually hear the audience audibly gasp when the company unveiled its 55-inch OLED HDTV. ¶ When the curtain came off, it revealed a thing of beauty, clear from even a ways back in the room. The model is still in the fairly early stages, but the whole “ultra definition” thing that the company promised is quite clear, even more so when you step closer to the thing — looking into it really feels like looking out a window. This thing is crazy sharp. Even more impressive is the size of the thing — it's 55-inches, and only a mere 5mm thin — so thin it was tough to properly photograph, and the bezel was fairly hard to spot as well. The company has promised to show off the display throughout CES — pricing and availability, not so much. — *Brian Heater*

Price
TBD

AVAILABILITY
TBD

FIRST IMPRESSIONS
A stunning example of “ultra definition,” this 55-inch, 5mm thin OLED HDTV is certainly something to desire.

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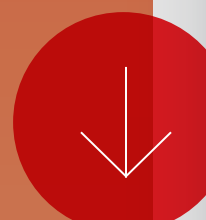
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CES
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ROPIN' THEM IN

Pepcom gave its Digital Experience a decidedly Western kick this year, complete with a lasso-spinning cowboy, ladies decked out in cowhides and even a few trailblazin' devices.



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AT&T GALAXY NOTE

It's official! As expected, everyone's favorite giant superphone, the Samsung Galaxy Note, is finally making its way to the US — and with a dash of LTE, no less. The mini tablet will be available on AT&T in both carbon blue and ceramic white for an undisclosed price sometime in the near future. Specs are almost identical to its global sibling — 5.3-inch 1280 x 800 HD Super AMOLED display, S Pen, Android 2.3.6 (Gingerbread), 1GB of RAM, 16GB of built-in storage, up to 32GB of additional storage via microSD, 2,500mAh battery, eight megapixel 1080p AF camera with flash and two megapixel front-facing camera. Like its stablemate, the Samsung Galaxy S II Skyrocket, AT&T's Galaxy Note receives a brain transplant with a 1.5GHz dual-core CPU (presumably a Qualcomm Snapdragon S3) replacing the 1.4GHz dual-core Exynos processor. Beyond support for AT&T's speedy LTE network, the device includes UMTS/HSPA+ (21Mbps) and GSM/EDGE world radios. This US variant will also be available with a number of accessories, including a desktop dock, [\(CONT.\)](#)

PRICE
TBD**AVAILABILITY**
TBD**FIRST IMPRESSIONS**
Subtle changes make this note a fair follow up to its brother from another carrier.



a spare battery charging system, flip cover cases (available in multiple colors) and the Galaxy Note S Pen holder kit. ¶ We took AT&T's Galaxy Note for a spin, and it's a dead-ringer for the global model in terms of size, weight and general layout. The most obvious differences are the carrier logo just below the earpiece, and the four capacitive keys replacing the three-button layout (physical key flanked by capacitive buttons) common to non-US Galaxy handsets. Pop the battery cover and you'll notice subtler changes, with the plastic SIM and microSD card holders being replaced by thinner metallic ones in order to accommodate the additional thickness from (presumably) an LTE antenna mounted inside the battery door with matching contacts on the phone's chassis. Another difference is with the S Pen, which now features a contrasting grey side-button instead of the same black color as the pen's body. While the key is still just as difficult to locate by touch, it's now trivial to find at a glance. Performance wise, during our brief time with it, this version of the Note felt just as snappy as its predecessor, despite the aforementioned chipset swap. Unlike the other Galaxy S II-class devices on AT&T, there's no sign of NFC here.

— Myriam Joire

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VERIZON GALAXY TAB 7.7 WITH LTE

Well, what do we have here? Yes, it's the Samsung Galaxy Tab 7.7 with LTE for Verizon and it's just officially landed in the US. We're not terribly surprised, but we're not complaining, either. This 7.9mm (0.31 inches) thin tablet packs a 7.7-inch 1280x800 Super AMOLED Plus (non-PenTile) high-definition display, Android 3.2 (Honeycomb), an unnamed 1.4GHz dual core processor (likely the same Exynos CPU as its HSPA+ cousin), 1GB of RAM, 16 GB of built-in storage, up to 32GB of microSD-based storage, an infrared transmitter, a three megapixel AF camera with flash and a two megapixel front-facing camera. Of course, you'll also find TouchWiz on board, along with Samsung's media and social hubs, plus Peel Smart Remote, Wi-Fi Direct and AllShare (DLNA) — at 340g (12oz), it's pretty lightweight, too. Connectivity is provided via Verizon's LTE and CDMA networks as well as support for WiFi a/b/g/n. A few optional acces- [\(CONT.\)](#)

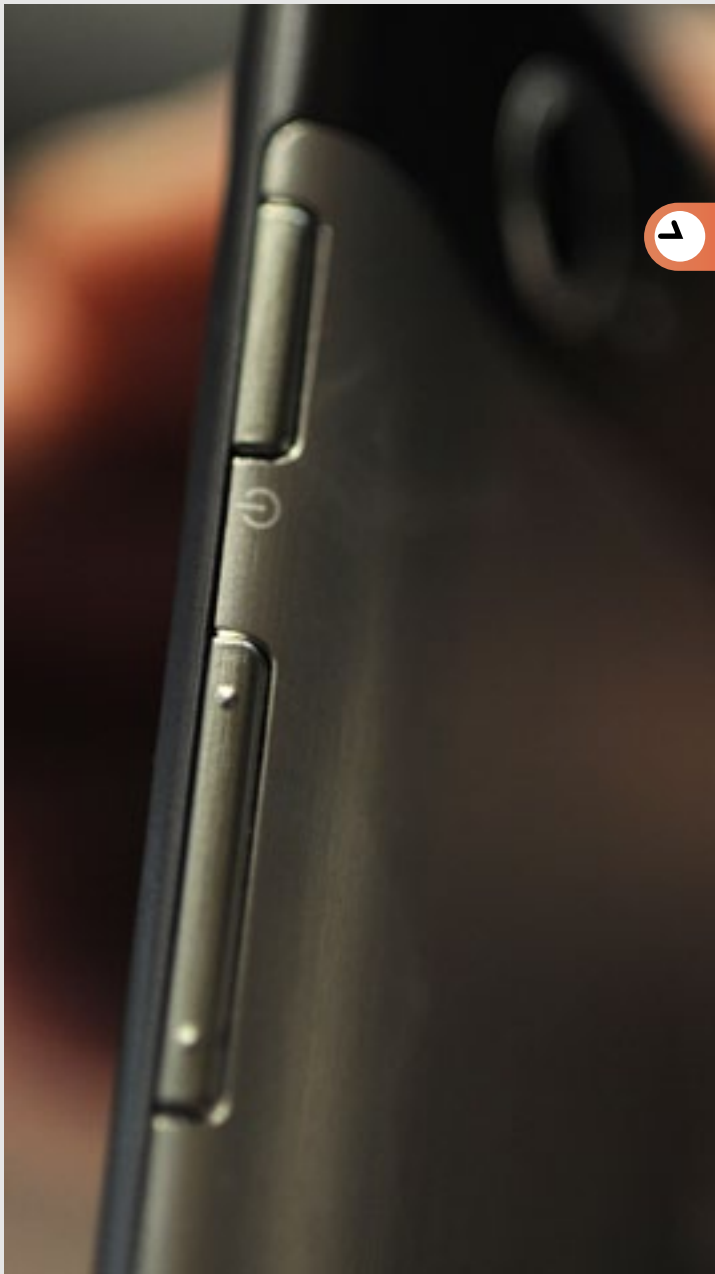
PRICE
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AVAILABILITY
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FIRST IMPRESSIONS
Finally hitting the US market, this tablet is a pleasure to behold with an impressive display and top notch specs, sadly though, no info yet on the release date and price.

sories will be offered for the device, including a keyboard dock, a multimedia dock, a USB/SD adapter connection kit, an HDTV adapter and a book cover case. ¶ We did have the opportunity to play with Verizon's Galaxy Tab 7.7 and the most striking feature is definitely the screen — it's simply phenomenal, with incredible viewing angles and amazing contrast. The brushed-metal back cover further contributes to the premium feel of the device. Oh, and did we mention it's super thin? It's interesting to note that like most of Verizon's recent LTE phones, this tablet uses a micro-SIM instead of a standard-sized card. As for performance, it's top-notch with a fluid experience all around. Sadly, pricing and availability remain a mystery for now.

— Myriam Joire



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HTC TITAN II

So the rumors were true — the HTC Titan II is basically an HTC Titan with LTE for AT&T and a 16 megapixel camera with back-side illuminated sensor, f/2.6 AF lens and dual LED flash (vs. eight megapixels sensor and f/2.2 lens on the original). The industrial design is more traditional HTC fare (think Thunderbolt) — gone is the rather elegant look and feel of its predecessor, along with its removable battery (although the pack grows from 1600mAh to 1730mAh). After spending some quality time with HTC's latest Windows Phone flagship we came away pretty impressed with the camera. Our test shots contain tons of detail, with accurate colors and very little noise. We left the handset in the default "Intelligent Auto" scene mode for the majority of our pictures, and it handled the varying conditions with aplomb. Exposure was particularly well balanced, despite difficult lighting condition. — *Myriam Joire*

Price
TBD

AVAILABILITY
TBD

FIRST IMPRESSIONS
Brings LTE and a stellar shooter to AT&T's Mango faithful.

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HP ENVY 14 SPECTRE

As far as product launches go, this one wasn't very subtle. Just last week, HP's PR team widely disseminated a brief video teasing a wispy laptop called the Spectre. We couldn't parse too many details for all the shadows and quick-cuts, but we gathered this much: it seemed to be thin, and far too sleek to be just another business-centric Ultrabook. Nope, it would be arresting, bold and highly stylized. And this time, it would be meant for mainstream consumers. ¶ Well, folks: we were right (except for the thin part, anyway). HP just unveiled the Envy 14 Spectre, and is billing it as a "premium Ultrabook." Which makes sense, since the laptop starts at \$1,400, making it even pricier than the 13-inch MacBook Air (to say nothing of all those \$900 ultraportables hitting the market). Above all, the company is justifying that price with a daring glass design, which HP insists makes the laptop more durable, not less so. In addition to cost, though, the trade-off to all that armor is some extra heft: the [\(CONT.\)](#)

PRICE
\$1400+

AVAILABILITY
TBD

FIRST IMPRESSIONS
HP comes out swinging with a spec-laden, feature rich power package, albeit a bit full figured for the Ultrabook moniker.



CES 2012

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Spectre weighs in at 3.79 pounds and measures 20mm thick, making it the chubbiest 13-inch Ultrabook we've seen yet. ¶ So what does \$1,400 get you, aside from a memorable design? We're told the laptop comes standard with a 14-inch, 1600 x 900 Radiance Display (hurrah!), Core i5-2467M CPU, 4GB of RAM, a nine-hour battery, backlit keyboard, carrying case and — get this — an NFC chip built into the palm rest for transferring URLs from your phone's browser. Other bells and whistles include Intel Wireless Display, HP's CoolSense technology, Beats, HP Wireless Audio, full copies of Photoshop and Premiere Elements and a two-year subscription to Norton Internet Security. Got that, guys? Upgrade options include a 256GB SSD and an extra 4GB of RAM, but other than that, what you see is what you get (and to be fair, you get a lot). ¶ There's

no question that the Spectre has a unique, if bulky design, and that it's stuffed to the gills with all the high-end specs and marquee features you could want (and also, some gimmicks like NFC, which you might never have asked for). What we don't understand, though, is why HP chose to call this weighty, expensive thing an Ultrabook. It just doesn't seem wise to invite comparisons with machines that are thinner, lighter, promise similar performance and cost hundreds of dollars less. Are all of those extra perks like a 1600 x 900 display, WiDi, Wireless Audio and NFC worth the premium? Or are we better off re-thinking the Spectre entirely and pitting it against more robust laptops, such as the Dell XPS 14z and Sony VAIO SA? We'll let you chew on that until we get one in to review.

— Dana Wollman



Jabra

PEPCOM

Jabra

Jabra

DISCOVER FREEDOM

RAIG ALEXANDER
LIFE-TIME IRONMAN
WORLD CHAMPION

CES 2012

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DO THE RUNNINGMAN

Jabra put its sporty Bluetooth headset to work and its spokesmodel on the run at Digital Experience 2012. Like the Energizer bunny, this guy just kept on going and going and going.

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SONY XPERIA ION

At today's Sony event at CES, the company took the wraps off its "newest progeny" the Xperia Ion. Running Android 2.3.7, the device isn't loaded up with the latest Google mobile OS — that'd be Ice Cream Sandwich, but the company assures us it's coming in the 2nd quarter of this year. And, yes, it'll be rocking a skinned UX — sorry, folks. The handset strikes a definite presence in hand, bucking the thinner is better trend we've seen over the last few days for a bulkier, premium build. Beneath that hulking construction lies a dual-core 1.5GHz Qualcomm MSM8660 processor, powering the 4.6-inch display. Fans of the new, Ericsson-less Sony can snag this handset when it goes on sale globally in March. ¶ As we mentioned earlier, the Xperia Ion definitely cuts a heavy presence in the hand. Rather than push out a high-end smartphone wrapped in a cheap-feeling plastic casing, this handset is solid. In fact, the unibody design bars users from accessing the phone's internals. That's right, there's no accessing the battery or swapping out a microSD card, [\(CONT.\)](#)

Price
TBD

AVAILABILITY
March 2012

FIRST IMPRESSIONS
Sony's hefty new powerhouse smartphone has all the premium goods under the hood.



CES 2012

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you just get the 16GB of onboard storage. It should definitely suffice, but users looking to take full advantage of that 12 megapixel rear camera and its 1080p video capture might find themselves minding their media.¶ We only spent a few moments fussing with the camera app, but in that short time we were pleased to note the impressive quality of photos taken with the Exmor-R module. Those of you interested in video-calling will be glad to know the phone sports a 1.3 megapixel front-facer capable of 720p, so your friends and loved ones can see you as you were meant to look. ¶ Unfortunately, you have to take the good with the bad and we can't say this is a handset that zips along. In fact, we noticed a bit of sluggishness when attempting to navigate through Sony's Android overlay, which is surprising given its dual-core 1.5GHz processor. The likely culprit here is the company's own skin not being optimized for the chipset, but hopefully that performance hiccup can be sorted out when that Ice Cream Sandwich upgrade hits in Q2 2012. One other area of the device that also seemed to evince a hit or miss workability were the four capacitive buttons at the base. You'll notice in our hands-on video that we had to continually tap on the menu,

back, search and home icons to get a response. It seems our fingers had to be aimed quite a bit lower to trigger the soft keys. ¶ Of course, you're probably wondering just how gorgeous that HD Reality display is and we can verify — it is, indeed, quite sweet. The 4.6-inch expanse of the screen boasts a 1280 x 720p resolution that should delight users keen on streaming content from the likes of Netflix to their smartphone. If you happen to be possessed of tiny hands and tiny fingers, this is obviously not the handset for you, as we even struggled to manipulate it one-handed. No, this is a beast phone and requires beast claws, but don't let that discourage you should you fall on the smaller digit spectrum. ¶ NFC is supported on the device, as is AT&T's brand of 4G, which we were able to test here in the showroom. Despite being deep inside the convention center and amidst an invisible bevy of wireless demand, the network did seem to perform speedily. So, if you're in the market for a high quality, outsized display and happen to have a proclivity for LTE, a distinct lack of Carrier IQ (thanks, Supercurio) and all things Sony, then you'll want to check the Xperia Ion out when it hits this spring. — *Joeseeph Volpe*



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AT&T NOKIA LUMIA 900

The **Nokia Lumia 900** is still fresh in our mind from this afternoon's announcement, and fortunately it didn't take long for us to get our hands on the new LTE-laden device. The newest phone in the Lumia series is packing a 4.3-inch ClearBlack display, 1.4GHz single-core CPU, 512MB of RAM, and sports an 8 megapixel Carl Zeiss f/2.2 camera with LED flash that's capable of cranking out 720p HD video capture, as well as a one megapixel front-facing camera that uses f/2.4. The 1,830mAh battery is inclusive due to the phone's unibody polycarbonate build and can't be removed, but we're happy to see that the Lumia 900 will be able to crank out the LTE for a decent amount of time. ¶ You won't find a huge difference in outside looks between this and its predecessor, the Lumia 800, aside from the presence of a frontward-facing camera and the obviously larger display. The larger phone was still comfortable to hold in [\(CONT.\)](#)

PRICE
TBD**AVAILABILITY**
TBD**FIRST
IMPRESSIONS**

We only got a quick taste of this spec rich Nokia Lumia 900 LTE offering and it left us wanting more, but we'll have to wait and see when our appetites will be sated.



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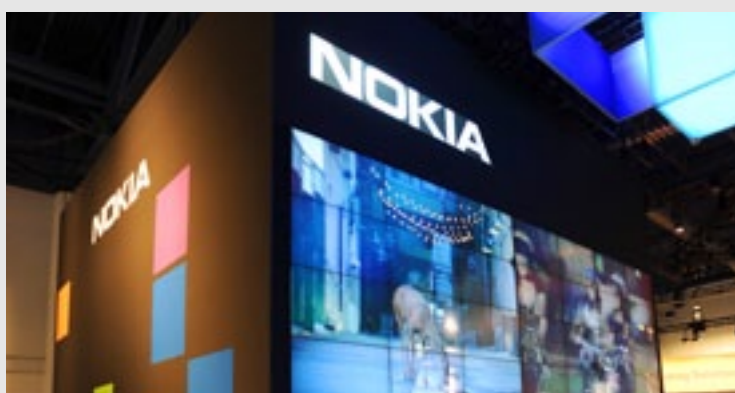
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our hands, and felt just as solid as ever with its polycarbonate build. When it comes to firmware, we weren't given the luxury of playing much with the handset since it was an early prototype model that is nowhere near its final status. The SIM card wasn't activated either, so we were unable to take its LTE capabilities for a test drive. Nokia and AT&T haven't been able to confirm exactly when we can expect the new device to actually be available in stores, nor the pricing at which it can be purchased, so we're just going to have to dream of the phone in our slumber at night; at least we know exactly what to dream about, right?

— Brad Molen



DAY THREE

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2012



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ROKU STREAMING STICK

The device that put MHL on the map for most every non-smartphone user was live and in person at CES, and just as you might have surmised from the renders, the Roku Streaming Stick looks like a little dongle with a Roku tag on it and adds the over-the-top greatness to any MHL display. Shiny, and just as prone to finger prints as any piano glass finished product, the thickness of the device makes us wonder if it'll clear the MHL compatible HDMI port of the thinnest of HDTVs — hopefully a small HDMI extender will be bundled in.

— Ben Drawbaugh

PRICE
TBD

AVAILABILITY
Fall 2012

FIRST IMPRESSIONS
Packing all the punch of the previous Roku devices into one small package, this little number makes your MHL-compatible dumb display look smart while you avoid the trials and tribulations of smart TV obsolescence.

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SAMSUNG 55-INCH SUPER OLED TV

We're seated here at Samsung's 2012 CES press event, and the company just revealed that it'll be matching rival LG's 55-inch OLED TV... with a 55-inch OLED TV of its own. Not surprisingly, the outfit's trumpeting its terrific color reproduction, the virtual absence of motion blur and face recognition. Sadly, there's not even a model number to mark down, and a price estimate should be even harder to find. It is, however, expected to ship in the latter half of 2012. There's no color filter needed here, either, as the self-emitting RGB sub-pixels take care of themselves; since light output on the Super OLED is controlled on a pixel-to-pixel basis, you can rest assured that your blacks will be deep and your whites bright. Other specs include a dual-core processor and 3D support. — *Darren Murph*

PRICE
TBD

AVAILABILITY
Second Half
of 2012

**FIRST
IMPRESSIONS**
It's a pleasure to behold, offering stunningly vivid and reliable colors, and virtually no motion blur with its dual-core processor and, yes, 3D support.

**CES
2012**

DAY 3

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SONY SMARTWATCH

Alongside Sony's pair of new Xperia handsets, the company's taken the chance to offer up some new smart accessories to augment their Android phones. Here's the SmartWatch. The spiritual successor to LiveView, this clippable watch detaches from the flexible watchstrap. In fact, we've been told that the device can be transplanted to any watchstrap. It's connected to Bluetooth through your phone — acting as a notifier and music player as well as the capability to answer calls and check-up on social networks like Facebook and Twitter. The capacitive touchscreen ably picked up our prods, although you'll need to tap the side-button to wake the display. Thanks to the lightweight rubbery strap, it's not a chore to wear either, with several strap color options readied for launch. It's not attempting to match the resolution of your smartphone, although it plays nice with any Sony phone running Android 2.1 and above. You can expect the device to adorn your arm some time this quarter at around \$149. — *Mat Smith*

PRICE
\$149

AVAILABILITY
First Quarter
2012

FIRST
IMPRESSIONS
This stylish, clippable watch is a fine companion to your Android 2.1+ devices and is Bluetooth ready for most casual phone, music & social network meandering.

CES
2012

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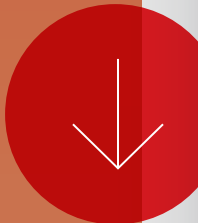
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SAMSUNG SMARTHOME WIFI WASHER AND DRYER

We've all needed to keep the laundry going while we're out and about. Samsung is looking to help with that and let us in on their plans at yesterday's presser. The WF457 washer and dryer set houses an 8-inch touchscreen, is WiFi-enabled and can be controlled from inside or outside of the home via the SmartHome app. With your smartphone or tablet, you can choose the cycle, duration and set-up notifications on your mobile device once the job is done. Neither is available as of yet, but rest assured, this will be a neat piece of tech you should consider. ¶ After spending some time controlling a few eight-second demo cycles, [\(CONT.\)](#)

PRICE
TBD

AVAILABILITY
TBD

FIRST
IMPRESSIONS
Always wanted to start the rinse cycle from your backyard? Yep, Samsung thought of that.

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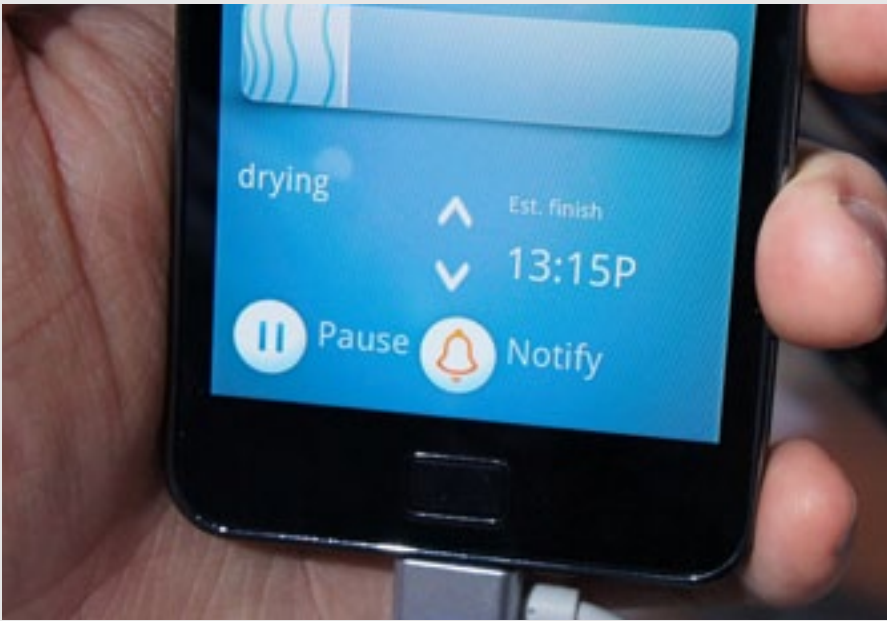
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we were pretty impressed with the system as a whole. Amazingly enough, our load of towels was completely dry. The app worked well and stayed connected for the most part — granted, we were in the midst of the CES WiFi cross-fire. We did encounter some issues when controlling the dryer with a smartphone and then interacting with the appliance's touchscreen. The SmartHome tech seemed to only like to take orders from one source at a time. Other than that, everything went off without a hitch and the phone notification feature is quite a nice touch. Either way, not having to get up to fluff those 400-thread-count sheets is a luxury we can all enjoy in some capacity. — *Billy Steele*



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TABLETMAN

While this year's show was dominated by big screen HDTVs and super slim Ultrabooks, at least one attendee seemed to be banking on the growing popularity of tablets — and, it would appear, full-body spandex suits.

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2012

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RAZER'S PROJECT FIONA

Breaking ground in the nearly nonexistent market of hardcore gaming tablets with renders is *interesting*, but there's nothing quite like grasping something tangible. Razer's project Fiona, for example, is something to grasp — sporting twin joystick handles on either side, it begs to be held. We couldn't help but oblige, and dropped by Razer's CES booth for a few minutes with the bold Windows 8 slab. Razer CEO Min-Liang Tan gave us the skinny — read on to get it yourself. ¶ For a prototype, Fiona felt incredibly solid — with the exception of a slightly sticky joystick and a very “developer” looking dongle, our demo unit felt like a finished product. The tablet's nunchuk-esque handles were solidly fastened to the device's metal frame, which was sandwiched between a soft plastic back and the device's 10.1-inch touchscreen. The four face buttons on each end weren't as poppy as we'd like, but worked well enough. Min [\(CONT.\)](#)

PRICE

Under \$1,000

AVAILABILITY

Q3 or Q4 2012

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

This gaming centric super light slate sports slick display chops and may be an interesting addition to your digital recreation arsenal when it hits later this year.



reminded us we were playing with a prototype. The handlebar controllers are mostly comfortable, and far superior to touchscreen controls — but we wonder how much they'd get in the way while using the slate for non-gaming purposes. The entire unit was deceptively light, too — we couldn't get an official weight out of Min-Liang, but it's safe to say that it feels about a third lighter than it looks. It's still a bit too hefty to hold in front of you for extended periods of time, but it was comfortable enough to grip in our lap. ¶ The Fiona runs on a third generation Intel Core i7 processor and an undisclosed GPU — Min's lips were sealed on the graphical details, but he promised us it was something hot. And hot it was — like any gaming machine, the Fiona's internals had a lot of steam to blow off. Still we almost didn't notice the heat — the controllers on the tablet's flanks don't just help you slay dragons, they keep your hands from getting burned, and off of the warm slate's rear end. Min continued to remind us we were playing with a prototype, and that they were working closely with Intel to ensure the device was adequately cooled. ¶ Min ran us through a brief game of *Space Marine*, it was playable, smooth and quite fetching. Fiona won't out-eye melt your dedicated gaming desktop, but our pupils flirted with liquefaction. Although Min-Liang told us the specs weren't final, the prototype slab has a native 1280 x 800, 10.1-inch display — again, it won't compete with your dedicated setup, but on the small

screen it still looks nice. Min said that the Fiona is ideal for gamers who want to pick up a game they've been playing on their home machine, syncing to the cloud via Steam, and picking up the same game later on the go. Sounds great, but just how long can a hardcore tablet last? Min told us to compare it to an Ultrabook — he couldn't give us official estimates, but said he wouldn't be surprised to see the final product last 2-3 hours. That seemed short, but then again, it's no worse than the PlayStation Vita's playtime, is it? ¶ Although Fiona is under development, Min-Liang seems confident it will start shipping in the latter half of 2012. It may have accessories, too — although the project is designed primarily to use specialized touch controls and the built-in gamepads, Min told us that it won't be closed off to any of Razer's other products, suggesting that Fiona docks and accessories will open the Windows 8 slate up to a more traditional computer interface. ¶ The Fiona's been under wraps for a while, and is approaching its proposed release window quickly. Unlike the Switchblade, Min told us, project Fiona is a prototype being designed for the market, and not a concept device. Expect to see it, he said. We will — it's an intriguing, bold take on tablet gaming. We're not sure how we'll like the handlebars while web browsing, or checking email but we'll give it the benefit of the doubt for now — or at least hope the final rig's controllers are detachable. — Sean Buckley

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PRICE
\$1,500

AVAILABILITY
February 2012

FIRST
IMPRESSIONS
Slim frame
with a banging
display, but is it
worth the price?



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SAMSUNG SERIES 9

Though we got to spend several weeks poking around the redesigned, 13-inch Series 9 laptop, we never did get to handle the new 15-inch version. It's a matter of particular curiosity for us, not just because yours truly has a minor laptop obsession, but also because we've never seen anything quite this thin with quite this expansive a display. So, we couldn't resist a little playtime when we stumbled upon it at Samsung's CES booth. Aside, from the industrial design, we were impressed by how it almost manages to match the 13-inch version in thinness: 0.58 inches thick versus half an inch for its little brother. And because Sammy crammed a 15-inch display into a 14-inch chassis, it doesn't particularly look like a 15-inch laptop. What's more, at 3.3 pounds, it weighs as much as the HP Folio, an Ultrabook with a 13-inch display. Impressive, yes, but given that \$1,500 price, it won't be an option for everyone, which is why it's especially paramount that the onslaught of 14 and 15-inch Ultrabooks doesn't include too many clunkers. — *Dana Wollman*

BLACKBERRY PLAYBOOK OS 2.0

Highlighting RIM's presence at CES 2012 is the official unveiling of PlayBook OS 2.0. On track for a February arrival, this release will deliver many features that productivity-minded users have pinned for since the tablet's arrival. First and foremost, we were given a demo of the PlayBook's new email client and address book. The new software is functional and intuitive, which offers a unified inbox, application integration and ties to social networks such as Twitter and LinkedIn. Also quite nice, the calendar displays both day and agenda views, along with the individuals you'll meet during the day. We also saw a quick demo of the BlackBerry Bridge functionality, which offers integration between the smartphone and tablet. While the PlayBook fell on its face a few times during this bit, we ultimately saw the smartphone successfully push web links and pictures to the tablet for easier viewing. Due to the Bridge hiccups, we noticed the PlayBook took especially long to boot, which RIM states is due to the support for Android apps. We were given a quick demo of this feature as well, and much to the company's relief, this segment went quite flawlessly and without fanfare. — *Zachary Lutz*

PRICE
TBD

AVAILABILITY
TBD

FIRST IMPRESSIONS
RIM breathes some life into the PlayBook, socializing with the network and local smartphones, most of the time, anyway.

CES
2012

DAY 3

7:19AM

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12:46PM

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SNAPSHOT

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SNAPSHOT

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CES
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DAY 3

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CUPCAKING FOR CONSUMER ELECTRONICS

Like boat shows and car shows, CES is crawling with the ultimate in promotional accessories, otherwise known as booth babes. These particular Nikon spokes folks donned Candy Land-inspired getups to push (what else?) digital cameras.



LENOVO K800 MEDFIELD SMARTPHONE

Well it looks like we have a surprise guest at Showstoppers tonight. Lenovo just dropped by with its just-announced K800 — the first Intel-powered smartphone to see the light of day. The beastly 4.5-inch 720p device sample that the company had on-hand is running a highly modified version of Android, and while the interface may not look familiar, the overall app experience shouldn't be much different from what you're used to. The official spec list includes a 1.6GHz Intel Medfield processor, Android 2.3, a TFT display and an 8 megapixel camera with a maximum sensitivity of ISO 3200. For now, the K800 is compatible with WCDMA HSPA+ and was running on AT&T's 3G network — there's no word of LTE on this version, which seems logical considering that the 4G network is a bit hard to come by in Lenovo's native China, where the device is expected to launch first. Naturally, there's also 802.11 b/g/n WiFi, Bluetooth 3.0 and GPS connectivity. — *By Zach Honig*

PRICE
TBD

AVAILABILITY
TBD

FIRST IMPRESSIONS
Lenovo's getting our brainboxes buzzing with this quick peek into an Intel phone future.

CES
2012

DAY 3

7:19AM

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2012

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KAROTZ

Nabaztag has died many a death, but that quirky rabbit's legacy still lives on in lil' bro Karotz. The desktop-friendly bunny, which just launched in the US today, is what parent company Violet is calling the "first Facebook hardware." It's a strong claim to make, but that superfluous moniker is actually better applied to the device's social networking integration. When connected to the internet, the unit's voice recognition software (processed by external servers) can execute commands to snap photos — taken via built-in webcam — and upload them to Facebook. You can even have it read your Twitter feed, in addition to the weather. The company's also released an app, available for Android and iOS, that gives users the ability to send typed messages through the unit — resulting in a talking Karotz — or simply manipulate its ears. It's a fun exercise in uselessness — at least, that's how one rep on the showroom floor put it. — *Joseph Volpe*

PRICE
\$129**AVAILABILITY**
Now**FIRST IMPRESSIONS**
Yeah, it has social networking integration, but it's really the cute factor that's in play here.

THE WINTEL WEAVE

Switched On

BY ROSS RUBIN

Ross Rubin (@rossrubin) is executive director and principal analyst of the NPD Connected Intelligence service at The NPD Group. Views expressed in Switched On are his own.

It would be challenging to name a partnership between two technology companies that has been as mutually beneficial as the one between Microsoft and Intel. Each company has had its share of dalliances — Intel chips, of course, now power Macs and Chromebooks while Microsoft has long supported Intel rival AMD and is now making a big push to support ARM processors in the next version of Windows. Nevertheless, the combination has yielded the “Wintel” portmanteau for the dominant PC platform that has consisted of Microsoft’s Windows software running on Intel chips. Throughout the years, Microsoft has upgraded Windows to take advantage of Intel advances such as hyper-threading and multi-core processing, as well as general optimizations due to the popularity of Intel chips. ¶ From their pushes at CES, though, one might wonder whether Microsoft and Intel are even talking to each other. To hear Intel tell it, the next big wave in computing is ultra-thin versions of the traditional notebook clamshell, similar to the MacBook Air. With Windows 8, though, Microsoft is focusing on the Metro touch user interface that is similar to the one used on Windows Phone. While it will work with any desktop or notebook that meets Microsoft’s requirements, clearly the real play is for Microsoft to reinvent its presence in the tablet market. Microsoft actually tried to kick-start the tablet game about a decade ago, only to see the iPad run away with it.


Both initiatives attack products that have been very successful for Apple, but have their share of challenges. Ultrabooks find themselves playing a strange game of relative value. With products such as the Acer S3 coming in at

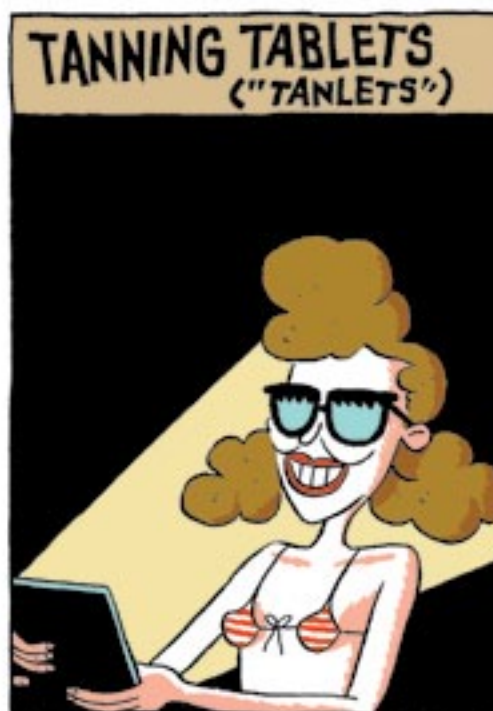
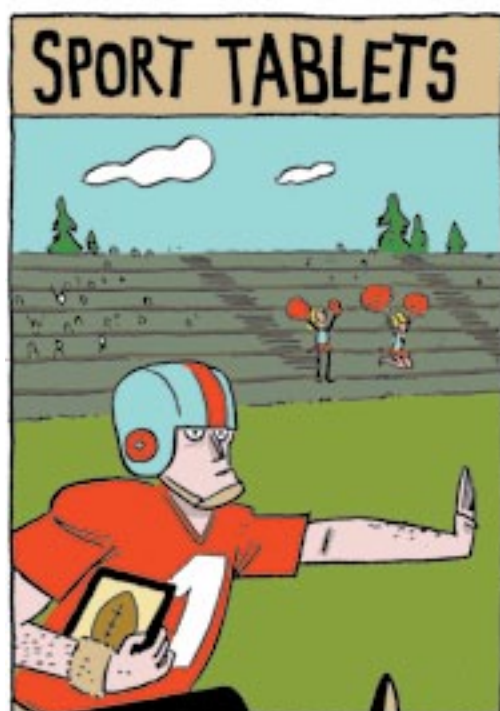
Microsoft calls tablets using the next version of Windows “no compromise” devices.

\$899, they are not only priced \$100 below Apple’s \$999 11-inch MacBook Air, but \$400 below the 13-inch model that shares the same screen size. However, while the S3 may be inexpensive compared to a Mac notebook, it is relatively expensive compared to most PC notebooks.

Then there’s the next version of Windows, which represents the greatest user interface change in the software product’s history. Because it brings the full power of the PC’s development and hardware support to the category, Microsoft calls tablets using the next version of Windows “no compromise” devices. But the classic Windows desktop — forever beckoning for the keyboard and mouse — is always eas-

ily accessible and threatening to create an experience that doesn’t hold up as purely as the touch interfaces of the iPad and Android tablets.

For the next few years, tablets and Ultrabooks will continue to represent a small part of the overall PC market. But while Intel’s and Microsoft’s directions may seem divergent, both Ultrabooks and tablets stands to help both of these longtime PC stakeholders. Indeed, as products such as the ASUS Transformer Prime have shown, it’s becoming increasingly practical to combine a tablet-like experience into a clamshell-like package when the need arises, creating something that ultimately delivers more customer benefit than a pure marketing push. 



The Last Word - Dustin Harbin



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3 HOURS AGO
iPhone 5 to have 21Mbps HSPA+ data? China Unicom says so



30 MINS AGO

Dell confirms XPS 14z will go on sale in the US in the 'coming weeks'

Remember that XPS 14z Dell teased at IFA? Yeah, well, it's arriving soon. As in, "the coming weeks" soon. The company just confirmed it's on the cusp of shipping here in the states, and while the outfit stopped short of giving a starting price, it's good and ready to talk specs. As we reported last month, it has the same industri...

By Dana Wollman September 29, 2011 12:35PM



54 MINS AGO

iPhone 5 cases and realistic unibody dummy show off incredible slimness

While we're only five days away from finding out the true appearance of the next-generation iPhone, our good friends over at BENM.A.T went ahead and crafted their very own unibody dummy using CAD drawings, CNC tools and a block of aluminum -- seriously, that's how they roll! Granted, this work's only based on...

By Richard Lai September 29, 2011 12:13PM



1 HOUR AGO

Kobo's Vox Android tablet appears online briefly, gets Canadian release date and pricing

A day after another little-known e-reader manufacturer announced a tablet, a new Android slate from Kobo made a brief online appearance on Future Shop's site, only to be quickly taken down. According to the Canadian retailer, the FCC-approved tablet will offer up a 7-inch display with a 1024 x 600 resolution, WiF...

By Brian Heater September 29, 2011 11:53AM



Iceland gets a data center to call its own, still believes in fairies

You say Iceland, we immediately think Eyjafjallajökull -- and no, we haven't had a narcoleptic collapse upon these very keys. It's been over a year since that volcano swept the headlines and interrupted air travel, providing outsiders with a skewed

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